

The Suffering Servant

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- [0 : 00] I turn back with me then to this prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 53. Verse 4 tells us, Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.
- Yet we seemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.
- Upon him was a chastisement that brought us peace. And with his stripes we are healed. This prophecy of Isaiah is recorded for us some 700 years before the coming of our Lord.
- And one of the main motives in this section of the prophecy that's explored by the prophet is that motive, the servant of the Lord.
- From chapter 42 and to the end of the book of Isaiah, there are four servant of the Lord passages.
- [1 : 15] The first one is in chapter 42 in which Isaiah, he introduces this servant of the Lord. He doesn't name him, but he introduces him in the way that he normally makes important statements.
- And he says, Behold my servant. Because he wants to draw all our attention to this one person.
- And he returns to the servant of the Lord theme in chapter 49. And there he proclaims him to be a light to the Gentiles. In chapter 50, he mentions the servant of the Lord again.
- And he depicts him as being the persecuted one. And in our passage here today, this morning, in chapter 53, he is mentioned for the fourth time.
- This time as a suffering servant of the Lord. And now we know that the person Isaiah speaks about is our Lord Jesus.
- [2 : 28] And scripture confirms that. And we have it especially in the book of Acts. And Philip's conversation with the Ethiopian eunuch.
- Who asked, he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And Philip had asked him, Do you understand this passage that you're reading? And he said, Well, how can I unless someone explains it to me?
- So Philip, He started explaining this passage. And the passage was, The passage of scripture that he was reading was this. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter.
- And like a lamb before its shearers is silent. Then Philip opened his mouth. And beginning with this scripture, He told him the good news about Jesus.
- So Philip has referred directly to this passage. And Isaiah begins this particular chapter, As he comes round to viewing and considering the suffering servant.
- [3 : 34] He says, What is really a rhetorical question. Who has believed what they heard from us? Who has believed our report?
- And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? And it's quite a startling statement. Who has believed what they have heard from us? Who has believed the good news of Jesus Christ?

And Isaiah seems to be astonished at the lukewarm reception that the Jews had given to the news of Christ. He's predicting this.

This is prophetic. But we know from history that when Jesus came, He came to His own. And His own people did not receive Him.

And this was the most glorious news that humanity had ever got. And when He came, when the Lord Jesus came and began His ministry, there was a pitiful lack of response.

[4 : 46] From among Israel. And Isaiah is talking here about the person of Jesus. In verse 2, He grew up before Him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at Him. He's talking about Jesus that in His earthly beginnings. Jesus came from a humble root.

He came from a humble background. That's what He means. It's a tender plant. It's not a robust plant. It's like a root out of the dry ground.

And what that suggests to us is that it suggests fragility and it suggests frailty to us as well. What it's telling us is that there was nothing regal about Him.

He had no form. He had no regal attire. He had no striking manner about Him. He had no warrior-like appearance or features.

[5 : 52] He was not an earthly ruler. He was not an earthly emperor. There was nothing about the Lord Jesus outwardly that seemed to attract attention.

He was humble, having come from humble roots. In fact, verse 3 tells us He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

He was despised as repeated again at the end of that same verse. He was despised and we esteemed Him not.

Men looked down their noses at Him. The Lord Jesus was an object of contempt to many. People withdrew from Him. He was a man of pain.

He was a man of many pains throughout His ministry. Many pains. He was a man who was acquainted with grief. That word, acquainted, is perhaps not strong enough, really.

[7 : 00] And what it really means is He was a man of sorrows. He was intimately associated with grief. Experimentally, in His ministry, associated with grief.

And that really is Isaiah's depiction of our Lord. He was a man of sorrows who was intimately associated with grief.

That's how he depicts the nature of our Lord. In verse 4 here, as he goes on to show to us the nature of our Lord's sufferings, he has moved on from that general statement of the nature of our Lord to a more detailed account of His sufferings, truly remarkable account of His sufferings.

And the first thing we have to note here with regard to the sufferings of Jesus is that it was substitutionary. He tells us there, surely He has borne our griefs.

He's emphatic about it. He's saying, surely He has borne our griefs, carried our griefs, He has carried our sorrows. And it's quite interesting between verse 3 and 4, the way that the language is put here.

[8 : 30] In verse 3, it lists sorrows and griefs first, and yet in verse 4, it's griefs and sorrows. And it's making more emphasis to that point, that He has borne our griefs, that He has carried our sorrows.

The emphasis that Isaiah has given here is on the suffering of our Lord. He has borne our griefs. It means that He has lifted up our griefs.

In chapter 52 and at verse 13, Behold, my servant shall act wisely, and he shall be high and lifted up.

He shall be high, he shall be exalted, he shall be lifted up. And it's there again in verse 12 of chapter 53 again. He was numbered with the transgressors, yet He bore the sins of many and makes intercession for the transgressors.

He bore the sins of many. He was lifted up because of the sins of many. And we understand that He lifted up our griefs and He bore the burden off it and He carried away our sorrows.

[9 : 47] He carried our sorrows or carried away our sorrows. And you just cannot miss the continual referral to our griefs and our sorrows and our transgressions and our sins, our iniquities.

It's used, this word our, it's used time after time in this passage. It's our sin. It's our grief. It's our sorrow that He bore.

1 Peter chapter 2 and in verse 24 is actually a direct reference to this passage.

And it tells us there in verse 24, He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness by His wounds you have been healed.

That's what Peter tells us. And the book of Hebrews in chapter 9 and in 28 is very similar in that same explanation that Christ has lifted up, that He bore our sins, that He died in our place, that He was our substitute.

[11 : 07] And the verse tells us that we esteemed Him. And this word esteemed is the same word defined in Genesis 15, 6, where Abraham believed God and all that God told him and it was credited to him as righteousness.

He was esteemed as being righteous because he believed God. It was credited to him. And here Isaiah is saying that we, that the people have looked on Jesus and they saw him dying and they thought it was for, he was dying for his own sin.

They thought that his own sin was being credited to him because of the false charges and the false accusations against him and that he was being put and crucified on this cross at Calvary because of his own sin.

But Jesus had no sin. He had no sin. He carried our sin to that cross. He was a sin bearer. And he was there in our place and he suffered on our behalf.

And no understanding of the cross is complete until you and I accept that. That he was there for us.

[12 : 25] And he was falsely accused. He was falsely condemned. And he was led out for punishment. You know, I watched a film at one time.

It was called The Passion of the Christ. I'm not saying that every detail of it was exact and I'm not encouraged or anything to watch it. One of the reasons I watched it was because a lot of people were asking me what I thought of it and I thought, well, I can't really answer that unless I see it for myself.

And one of the things that it did show me and gave me an understanding of was the cruelty and the viciousness and the torture of all that occurred in the scourging and in the crucifixion.

He was scourged and he was whipped and he was beaten and the crowd around him were bane for more blood.

They had even shouted out, let his blood be upon us. He was scourged publicly and that was a humiliation in itself. He was scourged with a whip and the strands of it were weighted with pieces of bone tearing his flesh to the innermost veins and arteries even to the point where the hidden inward parts of the body were exposed to view.

[13 : 59] There was that further humiliation of crucifixion, the nails hammered into his hands and into his feet, the agonizing physical torture that he endured.

He was wounded, he was pierced for our transgressions and he was crushed for our iniquities and it was the chastisement or the punishment for our peace that was laid upon him.

It was all laid upon him all that he suffered on that cross Calvary. And the language that we have here from Isaiah it's violent language there's no doubt whatsoever but that's what it was.

We cannot and we must not underestimate the violence and the brutality of the cross. And the four gospels confirm that to us. and he also experiences and endures the spiritual agonies from the sixth to the nine hour these three hours of darkness.

And I came across one commentator who said this about his sufferings of which we have but limited knowledge of course.

[15 : 27] And he said the mental anguish the overwhelming consciousness of God's anger the total absence of all aid or consolation from above the feeling of utter desertion by both God and man the tremendous conflict with all the powers of darkness the pressure of that enormous mass of transferred sin he had undertaken to bear as a representative of mankind and the desertion of divine grace and favour.

As we have it here in verse 8 the Messiah was cut off out of the land of the living. Abandoned is a word that is used that perhaps not everyone accepts and he was brought to the point in that in his spiritual sufferings there to cry my God my God why have you forsaken me?

Such was what he was enduring on our behalf. Thankfully he had that great victory cry it is finished he completed that work.

and from that same film that I watched when it came to the end of the film and it portrayed the Lord Jesus hanging on the cross I almost felt robbed because I was saying well where are the three hours of darkness where are the spiritual sufferings here but of course they couldn't do it we have no real insight into spiritual sufferings so how could they portray that in a film but scripture helps to give us an understanding of what the Lord went through on our behalf the dark powers are mentioned in scripture as we look at what was achieved out of all of his suffering at the cross he fought against these dark and evil powers these are the powers he had to confront there he had to battle with the devil throughout his ministry and he won victory after victory over the devil with his perfect obedience his active obedience and yet here in the conflict of the cross this is the supreme conflict in these three hours he had this ultimate battle with that dark enemy and we might ask well what did the cross achieve for us and how do we get any understanding of it scripture again gives us a glimpse and gives us some understanding in verse 15 of colossians chapter 2 we're told this he disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them what did the cross accomplish for us well there we're told that the enemy these powers these rulers and authorities the evil powers the devil was disarmed and stripped of his armor and the devil was stripped of his weaponry because Christ had the victory over him how did he have this victory over him verse 14 of colossians 2 tells us this by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside nailing it to that cross that's how he disarmed these powers our sins were cancelled through the cross through the victory of the cross that debt is cancelled and the document it is wiped completely clean all the charges against us are wiped clean if our faith and trust is in Jesus our charge sheet was nailed to that cross

God takes a charge sheet against each one of us and nails it to that cross when we come to faith in Jesus Christ and all the charges that were against you and me that price has been paid by him and that is the great transaction that we have and Paul again as he speaks to the church in Corinth in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 and in verse 21 he tells us this this great summary of that transaction he who had no sin was made to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in him and through his achievement on that cross at Calvary through his victory the price is paid by him and our charge sheet was nailed to the cross and Paul uses that illustration because the people at that time would have understood it the way that whenever there was a debt to be paid then it would be the paper whenever it was paid the paper would be pushed down on top of a nail that's where the scene originally came from it was paid on the nail in fact it used to happen in some shops here as well

[21 : 27] I seem to recall that's what's happened on the cross but except it's not us paying it's Christ paying the price for us through the nails that pierced him and we need to understand this point clearly that the hold that the devil had over each one of us was our sin and we were born as sinners and we were in the clutches in his clutches because of our sin because the devil could point to us and say you're one of mine because he could see that our sin was unconfessed and our sin was unforgiven he could say you're one of mine that's one of mine and I'm going to take you to be with me in hell but when Jesus pays the price in full and when a person comes to faith in

Jesus there's no debt left and so Satan has no hold no power over the Christian in that respect any longer the devil cannot condemn any of the Lord's people anymore and scripture is very clear in telling us that in so many places perhaps particularly so these marvelous words that Paul shares with us as he writes to the Romans in chapter 8 and verse 1 there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus not even one tiny jot there is no condemnation to those who love the Lord and have come to faith in the Lord that's what Jesus accomplished on the cross for all who believe and so when the devil says anything to us now about our sin or our guilt then we simply have to look towards that cross and we point to the cross and we say to the devil you have nothing on me now nothing because

Jesus took my charge sheet and Jesus nailed it to that cross and the price for my sin he paid that on that cross he paid it in full it is finished because you lost the battle within there and he has the victory and so you have nothing on me again that's the victory cry of every Christian to the devil you have nothing on me again and you never will have ever again my Lord has paid the price you could go on to tell the devil you've been disarmed it comes to you you've been disarmed you've been stripped of your power as we read there in Colossians chapter 2 stripped of your power over me you have been put to open shame and my Lord has triumphed over you that's how on the cross Jesus has a victory over the devil over sin and over death and he has the victory so that you and

I have the victory as well in him if our faith and our trust is placed in him you see all of this is all about what Christ has accomplished in his battle and his ultimate victory on that cross at Calvary at Golgotha it's absolutely nothing about ourselves there is nothing that any of us or any human being could ever have done or could ever do to attain this salvation because we are sinners and we fail miserably sinners it could only be Christ who did this for us and one day these evil powers Satan and his followers and other evil powers they will be held up to public ridicule one day they will be held up to public ridicule before the whole universe totally defeated because of the accomplishment of Jesus on that cross at

Calvary overcome and overpowered and overwhelmed and even crushed for all eternity and we know that this victory has truly been won we know that because of that powerful work of God in raising Jesus from the dead and in verse 12 11 and 12 we're given that and glimpses of it therefore I will divide him a portion with the many and he shall divide the spoil with his tongue because he poured out his soul to death he bore the sin of many but he makes intercession for the transgressors he is alive he is risen from that grave and the resurrection that resurrection it is a father's seal of approval of his sacrifice at Calvary his giving of himself Jesus he satisfied the divine justice that was required for sin that was a price that had to be paid and he had that victory cry it is finished the sacrifice was acceptable to the father and Jesus was raised from the dead and the chastisement that has now brought us peace peace with

[27 : 18] God in that relationship it was laid upon him and it's with his wounds that we are healed let's just close with the words that Isaiah had at the beginning of this chapter who has believed what they heard from us do you truly believe today this report from Isaiah what he tells us and what scripture tells us do you have the grace of God do you have the love of God the peace of God the joy of the Lord in your being and in your heart and in your soul because you know your sins are forgiven in Christ well if you do blessed are you in the name of the Lord however if you cannot say that then you are still in the devil's clutches and he is still able to point to you and he is still able to say you are one of mine because he can see your sin which is still unconfessed and unforgiven he can say of you you're still one of mine and I'm taking you to hell well in the words of Isaiah who here today has believed this report do you accept this account of what

Christ has done because he's done it for all of us and he asks that you come to him and that you confess your sin and that you will be forgiven because it's this or nothing it's no middle of the road it's this gospel or it's nothing Jesus said I am the way I am the truth I am the life it is only through him that you can be saved and by believing in this word of God and I pray that each and every one who is still unconfessed before God that you will go to him right now and plead forgiveness and beg him to come into your life right now for what Jesus has done he was pierced for our transgressions and he was crushed for our iniquities for our sin and the chastisement of our peace was our punishment was laid upon him and it's with his stripes all that he endured for us that we have that healing may God bless his word let's pray we thank you father for the clarity of your word and for the way of salvation for all that Jesus has done for us we bless you and thank you for the great gospel invitation come all of you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you that rest and we are aware oh lord that your word says come come quickly come now may it be that for any in here who are still out of

Christ that they will do just that that they will rush to you and that they will plead forgiveness and that they will experience forgiveness and that they will know that relationship with you in Jesus Christ to your name be the glory amen well let's conclude we'll sing to God's praise in Psalm 68 from the Scottish Psalter Psalm 68 from the Scottish Psalter his marvelous word to sing we'll sing to the tune Sheffield and it's verses 18 to 20 Psalm 68 and verses 18 to 20 from the Scottish Psalter on page 303 of the Blue Psalm books thou hast O Lord most glorious ascended up on high and in triumph victorious led captive captivity the verses 18 to 20 to God's praise praise thy hast

O Lord most glorious ascended upon high and in triumph victorious lay captive captive ■ of them I dwell.

Blessed be the Lord who is to us of our salvation goal.

[33 : 23] Who did he with his benefits of men just in the Lord?

He of salvation is the God who is our God most strong.

And unto God the Lord from death he is true to me on.

Now with the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with each one of you now and always. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[34 : 31] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.